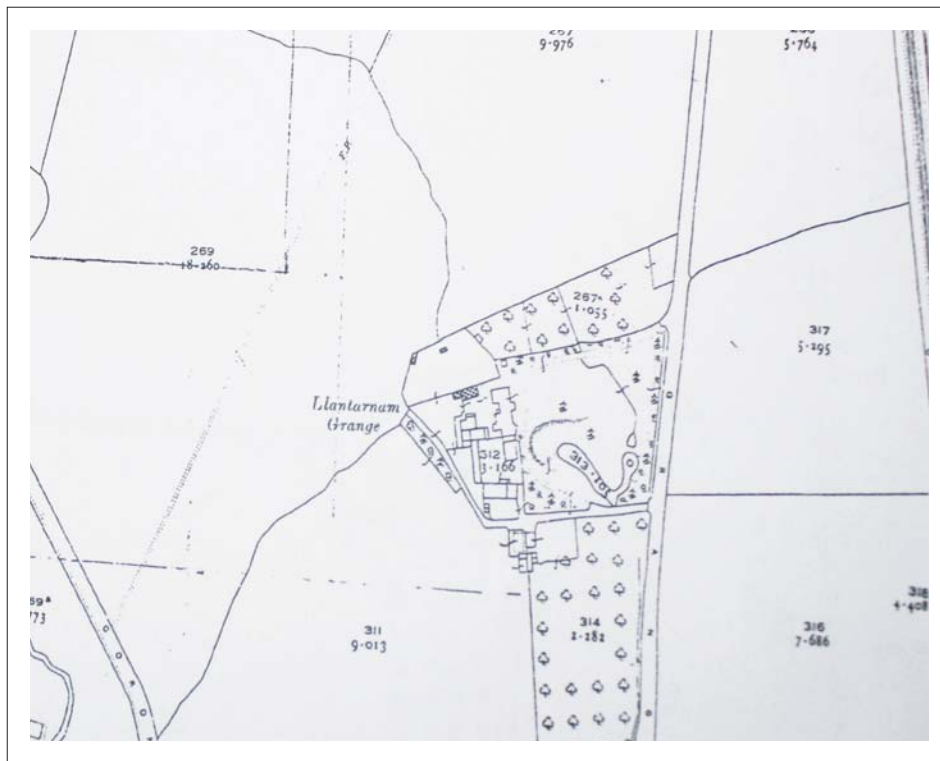




CAMBRIAN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECTS

## Llantarnam Grange, Cwmbran

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment



By

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Report No. 574

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## Non-Technical Summary

*This report presents the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) on behalf of DLA Architecture Ltd. The desk-based assessment forms the initial stage of pre-planning consent archaeological evaluation work on the site and will be followed by a programme of trial trenching in due course. The work focussed on the site of a proposed supermarket development on Grange Road, Cwmbran, and involved documentary and cartographic research to establish the history of land use on the site.*

### **1. Introduction**

The proposed development is located on Grange Road, Cwmbran in an area of extensive retail development to the east of the town centre, NGR ST 2977 9567. The development proposal has been submitted by DLA Architecture Ltd, South Park Way, Wakefield 41 Business Park, Wakefield, WF2 0XJ, acting as agents for WmMorrison Supermarkets Plc. The local planning authority is Torfaen County Borough Council.

The purpose of the archaeological desk based assessment is to provide Torfaen County Borough Council with information on the archaeological potential of the site prior to granting consent to a proposed planning application. The desk-based work will also provide a basis of knowledge from which the next stage of evaluation work on the site, a programme of trial trenching, can be carried out. The requirements for the archaeological work are set out in Planning Policy WALES, March 2002, Section 6.5, and Welsh Office Circular 60/96.

The proposed development area measures approximately 3.3ha. It is bounded to the north by Edlogan Way, to the west by Grange Road, to the east by the Newport to Abergavenny railway line, and to the south by an extant factory unit. The site is currently occupied by a car park, tennis court and bowling green.

The site is located close to Llantarnam Grange, a probable medieval monastic grange or farm belonging to Llantarnam Abbey, and as such is considered to hold archaeological potential. In particular, the south-west corner of the proposed development site is considered to be of interest given its proximity to the Grange.

### **2. Aims and Objectives**

The primary objective of the archaeological work is to identify any archaeological remains that may be present on the site through a detailed desk based assessment, following guidelines set by the Institute for Archaeologists in its *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*.

This work will provide details of the archaeological potential of the site, and its significance within the local, regional and national context. This will be used to inform a mitigation strategy to limit the impact of development on the archaeological resource. The evaluation will also provide recommendations for further archaeological work on the site which will allow the preservation by record of any archaeological remains encountered.

### **3. Methodology**

The desk based assessment involved the examination of all available written, cartographic and pictorial sources about the site held in the Historic Environment Record (HER) at Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) and in the collections at the Gwent Record Office in Cwmbran.

Sources consulted were:

- HER database
- Published literature
- Grey literature, including unpublished reports on previous excavations
- Tithe Enclosure and OS maps for Cwmbran
- Historic maps of Llantarnam Estate
- Sale particulars for Llantarnam Estate

## **4. Results of Desk Based Assessment**

### **4.1 Historical Background**

A building has stood on the site of Llantarnam Grange since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The original structure was a farmhouse known as Gelli-Las which was a grange, or farm, associated with Llantarnam Abbey (Williams 1990). Llantarnam Abbey is located 4km to the south-east of the development site. It was a Cistercian Abbey founded in 1179 as a daughter house of Strata Florida, one of the few Welsh Cistercian Houses. The Abbey owned several granges in the surrounding countryside, which would have provided food for the monks living at the Abbey. The Abbey was dissolved in 1536 as part of Henry VIII's reformation of the Church and the estate sold to William Morgan in 1554 who extensively redeveloped the site, destroying the majority of the original medieval buildings (Cadw 1994).

The Llantarnam Estate remained in the hands of the Morgan family until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when it began to be sold off in parcels. The farmhouse of Gelli-Las was one of the first parts of the estate to be sold, in 1871 to Alfred Pilliner. The remainder of the estate was sold in lots in 1885.

Alfred Pilliner converted the Tudor farmhouse into a small stately home and renamed it Llantarnam Grange. The construction of the Grange is likely to have led to the destruction of the original farmhouse, indeed all the buildings recorded on the site are thought to be 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. In 1932 the Grange was sold to William Jones, the Managing Director of the Avondale Tinplate Works. He subsequently sold it to Cwmbran Development Corporation in 1952 who then let it to the GPO for use as a sorting office. In 1983 the maintenance of the house was taken over by the Trustees of Llantarnam Grange and the site converted to an Arts Centre (Barber 1999).

### **4.2 Map Regression**

The earliest map depicting the site is the Tithe Map of 1839 (see fig. 1). This records the two field which make up the proposed development site as belonging to Gelly-Laes (sic) farm, one of which was used for pasture and the other arable. The landowner is listed as John Lawrence, with the farm tenanted by Joseph Kidner. Gelli-Las farmhouse is shown as a long rectangular building with a small garden. Three outbuildings associated with the farmhouse are arranged around an L-shaped yard. The farmhouse is located at the end of a road or track which branches off the main Cwmbran to Caerleon road. To the south of the farmhouse and yard a narrow strip of woodland is depicted. No outbuildings or structural features are depicted within the proposed development area.

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map of 1882 (see fig. 2) depicts the changes to the site brought about by Alfred Pilliner. The rectangular farmhouse has been replaced by a large house and numerous outbuildings. The yard and garden to the front of the farmhouse have been converted into stately gardens with walkways, a small lake and woodland planted to hide the property from the road. A drive leads from the road to the front of the house. The road has been extended beyond the Grange, continuing south following the line of the woodland. The fields that make up the proposed development site have been truncated on their eastern side by the construction of the railway, and their layout has become more regular, with the amalgamation of several of the small fields shown on the tithe map facilitating the creation of large square fields.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1901 (see fig. 3) and 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1920 (see fig. 4) OS maps show little change to the Grange, with the exception of the construction of additional outbuildings and the reclamation of part of a adjacent field to extend the garden. By 1901 the road had been renamed Grange Road and more properties had been built along it. No change is depicted to the fields that comprise the proposed

development site.

By 1954 the fields of the proposed development site had been amalgamated into the increasingly industrial landscape of Cwmbran. A large factory had been constructed in the fields immediately to the south and a rectangular building is depicted in the south-west corner of the site. No detail is given regarding the function of this building or the adjacent factory.

#### **4.3 Previous Archaeological work**

In 2007 a watching brief was undertaken by GGAT during the construction of a new entertainment complex on the site of a former multi-storey car park. This site is located immediately north of Llantarnam Grange in what used to be the adjacent field. It is west of the proposed development site. No archaeology was identified during the ground works, and the site was shown to have been extensively disturbed during the construction of the multi-storey car park and the re-routing of Glyndwr Road in the 1970s and 1980s (Riddett 2007).

#### **5. Summary**

The assessment of documentary and cartographic sources revealed that the two fields that make up the proposed development area were used for agriculture from at least the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. No evidence has been found to suggest that buildings or structures associated with the post-medieval use of the farm existed on the plot. Results from the watching brief undertaken on an adjacent plot suggest that the area has suffered extensive disturbance as a result of modern development.

#### **6. Acknowledgements**

Thanks to GGAT HER and the Torfaen County Records Office for their assistance.

#### **7. Bibliography**

Barber, C. 1999. *Eastern Valley: the story of Torfaen*. Abergavenny: Blorenge Books.

Cadw. 1994. *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales: Gwent*.

Riddett, R. 2007. *Former multi-storey car park, Glyndwr Road, Cwmbran*. GGAT report 2007/031

Williams, D. 1990. *Atlas of Cistercian lands in Wales*. Cardiff: Cardiff University Press.

Fig. 1. Tithe map of 1839 showing Gelli-Las farm and the two fields that make up the proposed development site (marked with an S)

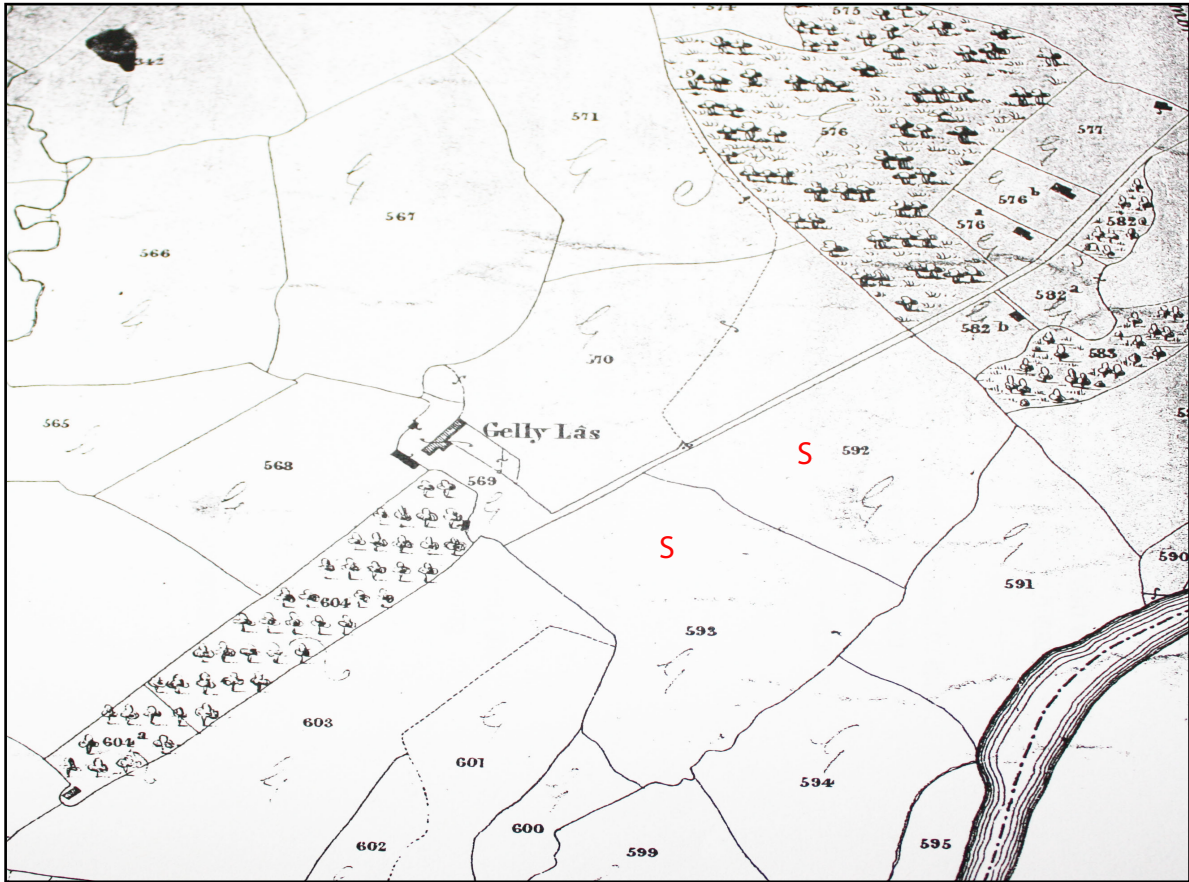


Fig. 2. 1st edition OS map of 1882 showing redeveloped Llantarnam Grange and the two fields that make up the proposed development site.

Fig. 3. 2nd edition OS map of 1901 showing Llantarnam Grange and adjacent fields

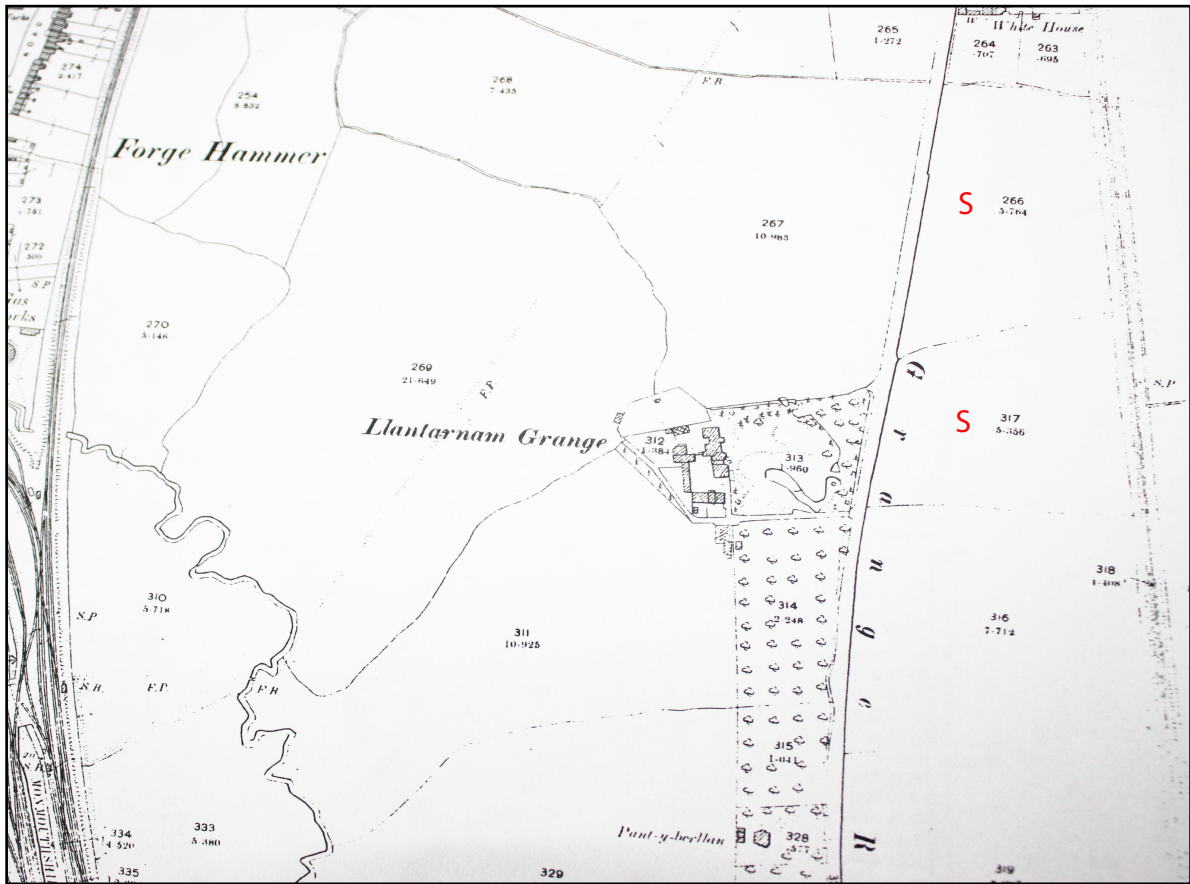


Fig. 4. 3rd edition OS map of 1920 showing Llantarnam Grange and adjacent fields





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